



SPLASH

A Comprehensive Study of North Pacific Humpback Whales

Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpback Whales

Information Sheet

What is SPLASH? SPLASH is an international cooperative effort to understand the population structure of humpback whales across the North Pacific, and to assess the status, trends and potential human impacts to this population. The project has broad international and national participation.

How will SPLASH be accomplished? SPLASH will use consistent sampling efforts in feeding and wintering areas of humpbacks within the North Pacific. Field techniques such as photo-identification and biopsy tissue sampling will be the primary field methods employed.

What are the objectives of SPLASH?

Obtain a current estimate of overall abundance of humpback whales within the North Pacific;

Provide an understanding of population structure and migratory interchange using genetic markers and photo-identification;

Estimate the abundance of specific humpback whale wintering and feeding areas to better serve management needs;

Provide information on trends in abundance;

Improve understanding of population parameters including reproductive, mortality, and pregnancy rates as well as age/sex structure;

Describe the influence of population processes on genetic diversity and exchange;

Identify habitat and characterize use; and

Identify human impacts (entanglement, toxicology, etc.).

What are the regions to be studied?

Western North Pacific wintering areas

Hawaiian Islands

Mexico

Central America

California, Oregon, and Washington

British Columbia

Western Gulf of Alaska

Southeast Alaska including the East Gulf

Aleutian Islands and Bering Seas

Western North Pacific waters off Russia



When will SPLASH take place?

SPLASH is a three winter, two summer program effort with a proposed start time of December 2003. The SPLASH program will run through the summer of 2007.

How can you get involved?

NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary looks forward to working to create education opportunities for students, teachers and the public. The SPLASH program offers us an amazing glimpse into the world of humpback whales of the North Pacific and the researchers who study them. We look forward to taking this journey with you!

SPLASH Steering Committee

The steering committee for SPLASH includes the following organizations: Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA; National Marine Mammal Laboratory, NOAA; National Marine Sanctuary Program, NOAA; National Park Service, Department of Interior; Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and Instituto Nacional de Ecologia, Mexico.



For More Information go to: <http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov>
or email: humpbackwhale@noaa.gov